

# Tips for creating better presentations

You have a presentation to create. It's important. But, formatting diagrams can take forever and the text on your slides seems to have a mind of its own.

Sound about right? Creating professional, unique presentations can be much easier than you think. Looking for tips for an earlier version of PowerPoint? [Get tips for creating better presentations with Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003.](#)

## Grab the viewer's attention

Creating slides that get the viewer's attention is not about how much you can fit on the screen. It's about using the space on your slides effectively. Don't crowd your slides, and only include elements that contribute to the points you want to make. When you use graphics on a slide, choose images that serve a purpose (such as a chart or diagram that displays a direct benefit of your idea). For example:



*Two versions, same content: The slide on the right uses a simple graphic to replace some of the slide text and makes a much stronger point.*

### 1. Apply the TMA theme template

A theme is a coordinated set of fonts, colors, and graphic effects that you can apply to your entire document with just a click. In PowerPoint, the theme also includes the slide master and slide layouts.

When you apply a theme in your presentation, you automatically get slide layouts, color, fonts, and graphic effects that go together, and you can format content with just a few clicks. Our template is available to download on the [Speaker's Corner](#) page of our web site.

**Tip:** Do not use multiple themes. You can lose formatting and graphics if you cut and paste slides from multiple presentations. Stick to one slide show template/theme and copy/paste content into it. This is a time saver!

### 2. Use video and audio to convey your message more effectively.

Dynamic content, such as a brief video that illustrates an important point, is a great way to engage your audience. Using audio that helps convey your message can also help you keep your slides clean and approachable.

In PowerPoint 2010, video you insert from your files is now embedded by default, so you don't have to include multiple files when sharing your presentation electronically. You can also customize your embedded videos with easy-to-use tools such as video trim, fades, and effects. And with PowerPoint 2010, you can insert a video that you've uploaded to a website to play directly in your presentation.

- Learn about working with video:

[In PowerPoint 2010](#)  
[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

- Learn more about working with audio:

[In PowerPoint 2010](#)  
[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

### 3. Use graphics to emphasize key points

A well-chosen chart or diagram can often convey much more to your audience than boring bulleted text. Fortunately, creating charts and graphics has never been easier. In Office 2010 and Office 2007, Office graphics coordinate automatically with the active theme in your presentation.

- If Excel is installed on your computer, you automatically get the power of Excel charts when you create a chart in PowerPoint.

Just click the chart icon  on any content placeholder in the PowerPoint presentation to create a chart.

When your chart is created, an Excel worksheet opens where you can add and edit your data. And when you select the chart in your document, you see the Chart Tools **Design**, **Layout**, and **Format** tabs that make it easy to format and edit your chart. Find chart styles on the **Design** tab that automatically coordinate with your active document theme.

Learn more about working with charts:

[In PowerPoint 2010](#)

[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

- SmartArt graphics, introduced in Office 2007, enable you to create a professional-quality diagram literally as easily as typing a bulleted list. You just type in the SmartArt text pane and the diagram is automatically built for you. SmartArt layouts are available for many types of diagrams, ranging from simple lists to process diagrams, organization charts, timelines, and much more.

Click the SmartArt icon  on any content placeholder to add a SmartArt graphic.

When you select a SmartArt diagram, the SmartArt tools tabs become available on the Ribbon. On the SmartArt Tools **Design** tab, you can use galleries to select a SmartArt style that coordinates with the effects of your theme. You can even select a different SmartArt layout to apply to your active diagram. The layout is updated, but the content and formatting remain. You can just point to options in any of those galleries to preview your selection before applying it.



Use the text pane to add text to the graphic. Press enter to add a new shape or content at the same level, and then press Tab to create a sub-shape or sub-content, such as shown here

### 4. Use animations and transitions wisely.

Having text and graphics appear on-screen just when you need them can be a nice touch. However, using too much animation can distract from your presentation's content.

- For effects that emphasize your points without overwhelming your audience, limit animation to key points, and use consistent animation choices throughout the presentation. Customize, preview, and apply animations directly from the **Animations** tab in PowerPoint 2010. In PowerPoint 2007, find the **Custom Animation** pane on the **Animations** tab.
- Consistent or complementary choices in slide transitions provide a professional touch without being distracting. Customize, preview, and apply transitions from the **Transitions** tab in PowerPoint 2010 or the **Animations** tab in PowerPoint 2007.

Learn about working with animations and transitions:

[In PowerPoint 2010](#)

[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

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## Clearly communicate your information

Want slides that clearly communicate your most important points? PowerPoint provides a host of tools for keeping your slides consistent, precise, and professional.

Take a look at two versions of a basic bulleted text slide below. The text in both slides is identical. Which would you prefer to present?



Two versions, same content: The version on the right uses the **slide master and layout formatting in the presentation theme** for a more organized, readable slide.

### 5. Use masters and layouts to save time and get better results.

The slide master is one of the most important tools in PowerPoint for creating easy-to-use, great-looking presentations. The master gives you a central place to add content and formatting that you want to appear on all (or most) of your slides. Formatting and layout that you do on the slide master automatically updates throughout the slide layouts in your presentation, saving you a tremendous amount of time and effort, and helping to keep your slides consistent. To access the slide master, on the **View** tab, click **Slide Master**.

**Tip:** To hide graphics that you place on the master for just one slide, on the **Design** tab, in the **Background** group, click **Hide Background Graphics**.

### 6. Consider differences between print and on-screen presentations.

Presentations designed to be viewed on screen don't always work well when you print them. Dark backgrounds that look good on slides, for example, rarely print well. Similarly, footer content that you need in print is likely to be distracting on-screen. Fortunately, your TMA program coordinator will convert your PowerPoint presentation to a PDF handouts version. This will be available on the web site, as well as on the CME Handouts CD provided to all conference attendees.

### 7. Use notes pages to help deliver the story.

Use the Notes pane that appears below the slide in Normal view to write notes to yourself for your

Create and print notes pages:

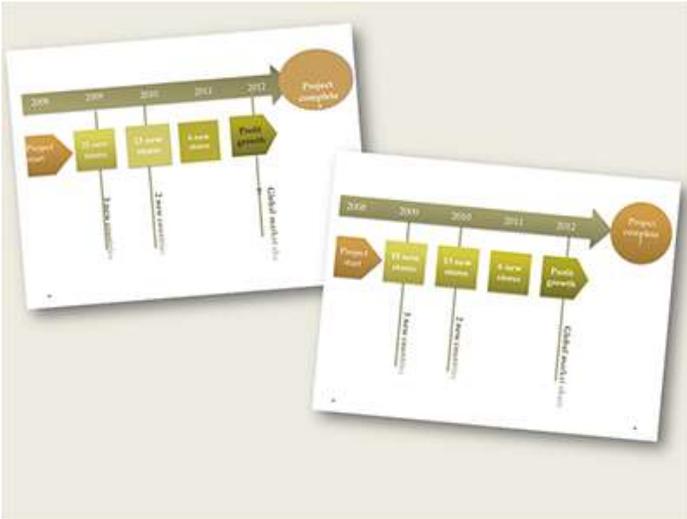
[In PowerPoint 2010](#)

[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

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## Stay in control of your presentations

Custom colors, layouts, and graphics can do a lot for your presentation. But a misaligned flowchart, or a presentation that crashes on your client's computer, isn't likely to make the impression you want. For example, take a look at the two timeline graphic images below.



*Two versions of the same content: Nudging and fussing to create the graphic on the left took about an hour, and it's far from perfect. Using available PowerPoint tools, it took just a few minutes to create the flawless diagram on the right.*

### 8. Keep file size manageable.

A common cause of stress when you work in PowerPoint is that the file becomes too large to edit or for the presentation to run smoothly. Fortunately, this problem is easy to avoid by compressing the media in your files and using native PowerPoint features whenever possible (such as tables, charts, SmartArt graphics, and shapes) instead of importing and embedding objects from other programs.

**Tip:** PowerPoint presentations containing audio and video are often too large to send via email. We recommend signing up at [www.yousendit.com](http://www.yousendit.com) for a free account. You will be able to upload your presentation and email it directly to your program coordinator without worrying about mailbox size limitations.

Learn about compressing pictures in your presentations:

[In PowerPoint 2010](#)

[In PowerPoint 2007](#)

**Tip:** PowerPoint 2010 gives you the ability to compress the embedded video and audio files in your presentation as well. [Learn about compressing media.](#)

*This article was adapted from [12 Great Tips for Creating Better Presentations](#) by Stephanie Krieger at Microsoft, Inc.*